



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 14 1997

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: No Extension of December 1998 Deadline for Upgrading,
Replacing, or Closing Underground Storage Tanks

TO: Regional Administrators

Under regulations issued more than eight years ago, owners and operators of underground storage tanks (USTs) have until December 22, 1998 to upgrade, replace, or close USTs that do not meet EPA's technical standards for protection against spills, overfills, and corrosion.

I want you, as well as our State partners and UST owners and operators, to know that EPA does not intend to extend this deadline. While I recognize that there will not be 100 percent compliance by the deadline, extending it would reduce the incentive to comply and would be unfair to the many UST owners and operators who have already complied.

The 1998 requirements are a key element in the ongoing State-EPA effort to prevent groundwater contamination. States have told us that USTs are their most common source of groundwater contamination and that petroleum is the most common contaminant. In many cases, UST releases have resulted in contamination of public or private drinking water supplies.

I know that EPA's Regional Offices and the States have been working with UST owners and operators to encourage compliance in advance of the deadline. I urge you not only to continue these efforts but also to begin working with the States to develop plans for dealing with those owners and operators who fail or refuse to comply with the requirements.


Carol M. Browner